

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 15727

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PARM, UR, US

SUBJECT: USA MAGAZINE DISCUSSES SALT

REF: MOSCOW 11680

1. SUMMARY: IMPORTANT ARTICLE ON SALT OUTLINES DEVELOPMENTS OF PAST YEAR AND MAJOR ISSUES FACED IN SALT TWO. WIDE RANGE OF OPINION IN U.S. IS DESCRIBED, WITH CRITICISM OF THOSE WHO ALLEGEDLY SEEK NUCLEAR SUPERIORITY. IF ONE ACCEPTS THESIS THAT SOVIETS DEBATE ARMS ISSUES THROUGH "VENTRILOQUY" USE OF U.S. ARGUMENTS, ARTICLE IS OF INTEREST FOR ITS EMPHASIS ON QUALITATIVE LIMITATIONS, ESPECIALLY WITH RESPECT TO MIRV. THERE MAY ALSO BE SIGNIFICANCE IN QUOTATION

OF BREZHNEV'S REPRIMAND IN SEPTEMBER FOR ADVOCATES OF "ALL-OR-NOTHING" APPROACH TO DISARMAMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. DECEMBER ISSUE OF USA MAGAZINE (SIGNED TO PRESS NOV. 19) LEADS WITH MAJOR ARTICLE ON SALT BY USA INSTITUTE STRATEGIC SPECIALISTS M.A. MIL'SHTEYN AND L.S. SEMEYKO. ARTICLE CONSTITUTES A BRIEF IN SUPPORT
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OF SALT, AIMED AS MUCH AT SOVIET AUDIENCE AS AT THE NEGOTIATIONS THEMSELVES. IT DELINEATES CAREFULLY VARIOUS OPINIONS IN U.S., RESERVING MOST OF ITS CRITICISM FOR "CERTAIN CIRCLES IN U.S. -- MAINLY MILITARY." IT

OFFERS CAREFULLY-DRAWN ADVOCACY OF EARLY AGREEMENT ON OFFENSIVE STRATEGIC WEAPONS IN SALT TWO, HINTING AT FOOT-DRAGGING AMONG CERTAIN SOVIET CIRCLES THROUGH DEVICE OF QUOTING BREZHNEV'S SLAP AT "ALL-OR-NOTHING" APPROACH IN TASHKENT IN SEPTEMBER (REFTEL).

3. ARTICLE SURVEYS (A) DEVELOPMENTS IN SALT SINCE 1972; (B) NATURE OF PROBLEMS FACED IN SALT TWO; AND (C) CURRENT U.S. ATTITUDES. SPECIFIC POINTS OF INTEREST ARE AS FOLLOWS:

A. INTERIM OFFENSIVE AGREEMENT DID NOT BLOCK ALL AVENUES OF STRATEGIC ARMS RACE. IT PERMITTED QUALITATIVE IMPROVEMENTS, SUCH AS MULTIPLE WARHEAD ACCURACY, RELIABILITY AND DEFENSIBILITY, AND DEVELOPMENT OF NEW SYSTEMS. HENCE JUNE 1973 AGREEMENT TO FOCUS ON QUALITATIVE AS WELL AS QUANTITATIVE LIMITATIONS WAS MAJOR STEP FORWARD. REAFFIRMATION OF EQUAL SECURITY PRINCIPLE WAS VALUABLE, AS WAS CONFIRMATION OF RELIANCE ON NATIONAL MEANS OF VERIFICATION. PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT WAS DECISION TO SEEK OFFENSIVE AGREEMENT IN 1974, WHICH PULLED RUG FROM BENEATH U.S. "HAWKS" WHO TRUMPETED THEIR CONCERNS ABOUT SOVIET ACHIEVEMENT OF FIRST-STRIKE CAPABILITY BY END OF FIVE-YEAR PERIOD COVERED IN INTERIM OFFENSIVE AGREEMENT. ARTICLE MENTIONS BUT DOES NOT DEVELOP POSSIBILITY OF PARTIAL AGREEMENTS CONTAINED IN JUNE 1973 BASIC PRINCIPLES DOCUMENT.

B. PROBLEMS OF CURRENT SALT PHASE ARE POLITICAL -- CERTAIN PEOPLE IN U.S. OPPOSE ANY STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION AGREEMENT -- AND MILITARY/TECHNICAL. LATTER CATEGORY BIOLDS DOWN TO ASYMMETRY (BOTH HARDWARE AND GEOGRAPHIC) AND DIFFICULTY OF MATCHING QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE LIMITATIONS. HARDWARE ASYMMETRY IS EXPLAINED BY "ACTION-REACTION" SYNDROME, WHILE GEOGRAPHIC ASYMMETRY IS ASCRIBED TO COLD WAR DEVELOPMENT OF U.S. FORWARD-BASED SYSTEMS, ESPECIALLY AIRCRAFT. IN DISCUSSING QUANTITATIVE LIMITATIONS ARTICLE URGES INCLUSION OF ALL STRATEGIC COMPONENTS, INCLUDING AIRCRAFT. ON QUANTITATIVE SIDE, ARTICLE DRAWS ON U.S. SOURCES TO CONFIDENTIAL

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EMPHASIZE IMPORTANCE OF LIMITING MIRV. IT EXPRESSES SKEPTICISM THAT MIRV IS ONLY SECOND-STRIKE DETERRENT, AND WARMS THAT UNLIMITED DEVELOPMENT OF MIRV HARBORS DANGER OF SCUTTling MILITARY DETENTE IN U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS. MIRVING MISSILES MUST BE REGARDED ALL THE MORE SERIOUSLY IN THE LIGHT OF ABM LIMITATIONS, SINCE THE ABM TREATY REMOVED THE NEED TO PENETRATE THICK DEFENSES.

C. ARTICLE TAKES THE SENATE AS THE MICROCOSM OF CURRENT U.S. ATTITUDES ON SALT. REVIEWING LEGISLATIVE HISTORY OF INTERIM OFFENSIVE AGREEMENT AND SUBSEQUENT EVENTS, IT DIVIDES SENATE INTO RIGHT, MIDDLE-OF-ROAD AND MODERATE WINGS. RIGHT WING INCLUDES SENATORS JACKSON, GOLDWATER, BYRD, THURMOND

AND BUCKLEY; IT INSISTS ON NUMERICAL EQUALITY AS ONLY MEASURE OF STRATEGIC PARITY. WORSE STILL, IT HAS FORCED DEVELOPMENT OF B-1 AND TRIDENT AS CONDITION OF APPROVING INTERIM AGREEMENT, WHICH IS "TANTAMOUNT TO ENSURING AMERICAN NUCLEAR SUPERIORITY." MODERATE WING SUPPORTS THESIS OF ASSYMETRICAL EQUALITY AND INCLUDES SENATORS MANSFIELD, FULBRIGHT, KENNEDY, PROXMIRE AND MUSKIE. MIDDLE-OF-ROADERS SUPPORTED COMPROMISE BETWEEN TWO WINGS IN APPROVING INTERIM AGREEMENT WITH PROVISIO THAT PERMANENT AGREEMENT SHOULD SEEK ICBM "LEVELS" NOT INFERIOR TO THOSE OF USSR, THEREBY PROVIDING SOME DISCRETION TO NEGOTIATORS. CHARGING THAT QUEST FOR UNILATERAL ADVANTAGE FUELS PENTAGON DEMANDS FOR NEW SYSTEMS, ARTICLE APPROVINGLY QUOTES NEW REPUBLIC SUGGESTION THAT U.S. SHOULD SLOW OR HALT B-1 AND TRIDENT PROGRAMS TO SHOW ITS DEVOTION TO EQUAL SECURITY.

4. THROUGHOUT ARTICLE THERE ARE DIRECT OR IMPLIED REFERENCES TO THREE MAJOR FACTORS WHICH MAKE AN OFFENSIVE WEAPONS TREATY DESIRABLE AND URGENT. FIRST IS THE NEED TO ENSURE THAT MILITARY DETENTE ACCOMPANIES POLITICAL DETENTE, AND TO ANCHOR U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS IN STABLE STRATEGIC BALANCE. SECOND IS THE NEED, FELT STRONGLY BY THE SOVIETS, TO CONVINCE LESSER POWERS THAT U.S.-SOVIET DETENTE IS IN THEIR INTERESTS, THAT REAL PROGRESS IS BEING MADE TOWARD REDUCING RISK OF WAR. FINALLY, THERE ARE SEVERAL REFERENCES TO ECONOMIC BENEFITS THAT WOULD FLOW FROM RESOURCES DIVERSION MADE POSSIBLE BY LIMITATION AND REDUCTION OF OFFENSIVE ARMS.

5. COMMENT: EMPHASIS ON B-1 AND TRIDENT IS NOT NEW, ALTHOUGH CONFIDENTIAL

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CHARGES THAT SOME ELEMENTS IN U.S. SEEK SUPERIORITY IS MORE POINTED THAN WE HAVE SEEN RECENTLY. DISCUSSION OF MIRV AND CORRELATION BETWEEN QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE LIMITATIONS COULD BE SEEN IN CONTEXT OF POSSIBLE INTERNAL DEBATE IN USSR, SINCE ONLY PUBLIC MEANS AVAILABLE TO PROTAGONISTS IN SUCH DEBATE OFTEN

IS SELECTIVE CITATION OF U.S. SOURCES. IF SO, AUTHORS APPEAR TO BE ON THE SIDE OF GIVING MUCH WEIGHT TO MIRVA AND QUALITATIVE FACTOR IN GENERAL.

6. DAO, WHICH IS FORWARDING ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS OF ARTICLE IN SEPARATE MESSAGE, IS NOT PERSUADED THAT REFLECTION OF SOVIET INTERNAL DEBATE AS OUTLINED ABOVE CAN BE ADDUCED FROM ARTICLE'S CITATION OF BREZHNEV "ALL-OR-NOTHING" COMMENT NOR FROM ITS PARTICULAR MIX OF ARGUMENTATION FROM US. SOURCES. MOREOVER, DAO BELIEVES THERE IS DOUBT CAST ON AUTHORS' ACCEPTANCE OF BASIC SALT PREMISE OF "MUTUALLY ASSURED DESTRUCTION", WHEREAS EMBASSY BELIEVES THIS CONCEPT IS NOT CALLED INTO QUESTION. SOMMERLATTE

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